United States Joint Forces Command
Joint Experimentation Directorate

Assured Access
-- Fact Sheet --
A Functional Warfighting Concept

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What is the problem?

The issue of access assurance is a lesson learned from our experiences during the 1990's. It is one that will be important well into the 21st century. "Access" in terms of basing and overflight rights has generally been granted to US forces, particularly when a host nation's sovereignty or other vital interests were at risk. However, physical and political restrictions to access may pose significant obstacles to future US military options.

US commanders may face a variety of strategies to deny access to the battlespace. These strategies could range from friendly persuasion of potential host countries to threats and coercion. The potential adversary may employ a range of "asymmetric" military options to offset the strengths of technically superior US military forces. They may physically attack the infrastructure supporting US forces or even attack the host country. Access denial can also take the form of diversionary events to cause a shift in force placement or planning. When a potential adversary limits our information flow or provides false information, he compounds the effectiveness of his denial strategies. As an access denial strategy, asymmetric warfare may undermine American and alliance will to conduct the overall operation or campaign.

The concept

One of the key enablers of the Rapid Decisive Operations concept is joint operations that assure friendly forces access to t
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> *"Much of our power projection capability depends on sustained access to regions of concern. Any number of circumstances might compromise our forward presence (both bases and forward operation forces) and therefore diminish our ability to apply military power, reducing our military and political influence in key regions of the world."*
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> **The National Defense Panel, 1997**

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Fact File

Future joint force commanders should encounter foes that have any or all of the following:

- Robust intelligence , surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) architecture with open access to commercially available space-based ISR products
- Cruise and ballistic missile with improved range / lethality, salvo fire capabilities on in-theater bases, staging areas and maritime forces
- Integrated air defense systems to protect their offensive capability and infrastructure while inflicting attrition losses on the joint force
- Long-range strike aircraft
- Weapons of mass effect
- Improved maritime capabilities in mine warfare, coastal defense cruise missiles, cruise missile armed patrol boats and submarines, all designed to deny access to the region
- Full-spectrum information warfare capabilities to include military

What will it take?

Prior to establishing a joint task force, the CINC sets the broad conditions for access by shaping the battlespace through a variety of preliminary actions that help set the conditions necessary to achieve his objectives. The objectives of these "shaping efforts" are to seize and exploit the initiative, to posture the right mix of forces, to establish the nature of the fight on our terms, and to set the conditions for rapid, decisive, effects-based operations.

Key elements of assured access operations include building strong alliances to isolate the adversary, achieving information and knowledge superiority, gaining and maintaining access to the battlespace, achieving dimensional superiority, and managing public perceptions at home and abroad. There are three realities in assuring access. First, there is no silver bullet that eliminates the threat posed by sophisticated and overlapping area-denial systems. Second, it takes time to develop the situational awareness necessary to neutralize the enemy's area-denial systems. And third, it takes a system-of-systems approach to prevail against area-denial threats.

What's next?

Millennium Challenge 2002 (MC02) will provide an excellent joint context opportunity to examine and analyze ongoing Service assured access concepts and capabilities as courses of action for the joint force commander. However, MC02 is but one of several experimental venues throughout the Department of Defense examining the issue of access. Other data points include:

- ✓ the USAF and USN are teaming to develop a joint concept of operations in the spring of 2002 that will combine the inherent capabilities of those services to combat an adversary's access denial capabilities
- ✓ the Office of Net Assessment will team with the Joint Staff and JFCOM during 2002 to continue its series of seminars and war games that examine the deployment and sustainment of the joint force in an access denial environment
- ✓ the USAF will conduct a Futures War Game towards the end of 2001 that will focus on assured access in the next decade

All of these Defense initiatives to a ection opportunities guide JFCOM access

Assured Access: *The ability to set and sustain the battlespace conditions necessary to provide the joint force commander (JFC) sufficient freedom of action to achieve the desired effects in conducting a rapid decisive operation.*